

# Slaying brings pleas for peace

By Ryan Middle  
 fmiddle@flintjournal.com • (810) 765-6283  
 and Kim Crawford  
 kcrawford@flintjournal.com • (810) 765-6242

**GENESEE TWP.** — The Rev. Martez Warren clasped hands with people beside him Friday and prayed for an end to the epidemic of violence that one day earlier ended a 5-year-old girl's life.

"If (her death) doesn't touch you here, I don't know what can," said Warren, pastor of Church Without Walls in Flint.

"This is ridiculous."

Niyauna S. Jones of Flint was killed Thursday afternoon when a gunman opened fire on the car she was in as it traveled along E. Carpenter Road in the township.

The gunfire also wounded Niyauna's 9-year-old sister, Tianna E. Jones.

Police arrested one man in the shooting Friday but still were looking for a second man wanted in the attack. Warrants in the case could be sought today, said court officials.

Police believe the intended target in the shooting was the Universal Auto Sales employee who was riding with the girls as their aunt and 18-year-old cousin took a Mercury Sable for a test drive about 2:30 p.m. Thursday.

Multiple gunshots from a white car pierced the Mercury Sable as it approached N. Saginaw Street, hitting the two girls but missing the three adults.

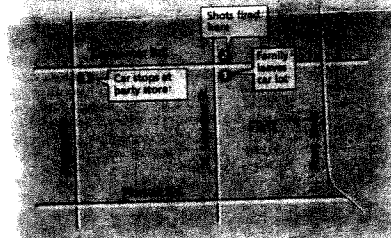
The 18-year-old drove about a half-mile to a convenience

— Peter, A2

## Scene of fatal shooting

The chronology of events in Thursday's fatal shooting of a 5-year-old Flint girl:

1. A Flint woman, 18, leaves Universal Auto Sales on N. Saginaw Street in a used Mercury Sable with her two young cousins, their aunt and a dealership employee.
2. Another car approaches on E. Carpenter Road and the occupants start shooting at the Sable, striking the two young sisters, 9 and 5.
3. The Sable speeds to a party store at Carpenter and Dupont Street, where the family heads inside for help. The 5-year-old is later pronounced dead at Hurley Medical Center.



Community members bow their heads in a prayer circle Friday during a vigil at Carpenter Road and N. Saginaw Street in Genesee Township. They were praying for Niyauna S. Jones, who was shot there Thursday.



Flint Journal photos • Ryan Garza

▲ "Our parents got to start being parents. Our youngsters are out here raising themselves. They don't care. They don't have any values over life, not even theirs. They don't care about theirs, so how are they going to care about yours," said Jacquetta Strodder (right), of Flint, on Friday after hugging Kenya Dotson, also of Flint, at a prayer vigil for Niyauna S. Jones. "It's just so easy to get a gun and shoot somebody now. It's just a lot of anger. Nobody's willing to talk about it or willing to compromise. It's just go and get a gun and kill somebody," she said.

"Kids are the future of our community. Something like this happens and you have no future ... the future of our community is dying with every crime committed."

— Sheldon A. Neely, Flint City Councilman

## Peace: Slaying brings pleas for peace | ◀ A1

nience store at Dupont Street and Carpenter Road, where the four family members ran inside for help.

The car lot employee, a Flint man, 23, bailed out of the car at the convenience store, jumped into another car and left. Police located him unharmed a short time later.

Area police spent Friday looking for two men, 23 and 21, suspected in the shooting.

Police have said they don't believe the suspects knew the girls or their family and were gunning for the used car worker, who officials have said is the son of the dealership's owner and worked there as a jack-of-all-trades. Owners of the dealership did not respond to requests for comment.

Jacquetta Strodder of Flint heard the gunfire Thursday afternoon while she was inside a McDonald's restaurant at the intersection where the shoot-

ing happened.

Strodder returned to the intersection Friday night to pray for Niyauna and an end to violence that has killed more than 30 people in Genesee County this year.

"I pray for that mother and the people that did the shooting," said Strodder.

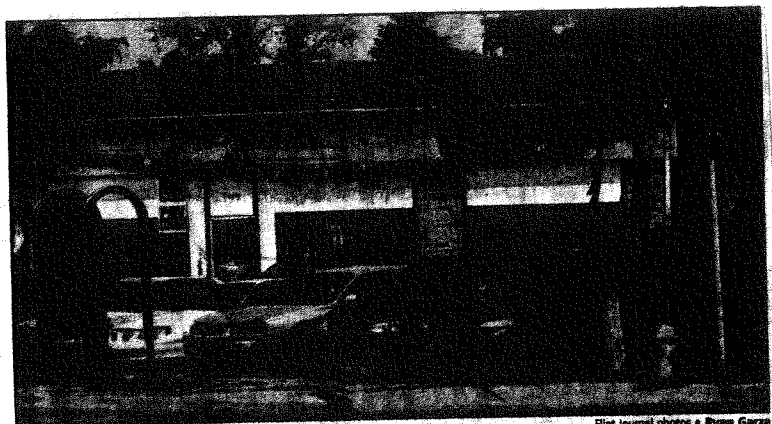
Strodder, who has a 5-year-old granddaughter, said it is a sad statement that children in the area automatically drop to the ground or hide behind houses when they hear the familiar sound of gunfire.

But Strodder said she won't give in to the violence.

"This is my city and I'm not leaving it," she said.

Flint City Councilman Sheldon A. Neely renewed his calls for the community to unite against violence.

"Kids are the future of our community," said Neely. "Something like this happens and you have no future ... the future of our community is dying with every crime committed."



Flint Journal photos • Ryan Garza

▲ The Universal Auto Sales building is at E. York Avenue and N. Saginaw Street in Flint. Niyauna S. Jones, 5, was taking a test drive with relatives in a car from this lot when she was shot. Her 9-year-old sister was wounded.

Neely said people need to come forward with information about the alleged killers. "Those criminals slept somewhere that night," said

Neely. Anyone with information about the shooting is asked to call Genesee Township police at (810) 640-3569.

Funeral arrangements for Niyauna were incomplete Friday and are being handled by Lawrence E. Moon Funeral Home in Flint.



The Flint Journal • Steve Jessmore

▲ First Ward City Councilman Darryl E. Buchanan (left) and Mayor Don Williamson stand outside the home where Victoria Taylor, 9, was shot to death Thursday morning.

## Accessible weapons and kids don't mix

By Ken Palmer

kpalmer@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6313  
and Joe Lawlor  
jlawlor@flintjournal.com •

**FLINT** — By now the story is all too familiar.

A child finds a gun in a house and kills another child.

It happened again Thursday, when 9-year-old Victoria Taylor was killed by a blast from a shotgun that had fallen into a child's hands in her home on Baldwin Boulevard in Flint. A relative said her parents had acquired the gun for protection.

It's another sad reminder that firearms — loaded ones, in particular — must not be left where children might find them, police and gun experts said.

"You don't want it to be a loss of life to bring it to people's minds," Flint police Capt. David Porter said. "(But) that's the tragic truth of it."

"You have to do things when you have children in the house to make sure they are safe."

You don't have to go back far to find other examples.

In February 2000, a 6-year-old boy shot and killed a 6-year-old classmate, Kayla Rolland, at Buell Elementary School in Beecher with a loaded handgun he found in his uncle's home.

Two other prominent cases involved another boy, who killed two of his brothers over a four-year span in the late 1980s.

The boy was 8 when he shot his 11-year-old brother with a loaded shotgun. At age 13, he shot and killed a 6-year-old brother with a handgun. The second shooting brought him a second-degree murder conviction in juvenile court.

Guns should always be stored unloaded, in a locked safe or fitted with a lock with keys and ammunition kept hidden, police and gun safety experts say.

All new guns come with trigger locks, and some police agencies provide them for free, said Dan Compeau, chief operating officer for Williams Gun Sight & Outfitters in Davison Township.

"You can find a cable lock for three or four bucks, and a good trigger lock is maybe \$10 to \$12," Compeau said.

Things can be more complicated for homeowners who live in high crime areas and

### Young lives lost

At least seven young people have been killed in shootings this year:

1. **DeANDRE D. ROBINSON:** The Flint 17-year-old was found shot in an abandoned house at 228 E. Taylor St., on Jan. 23.
2. **TRISTEN KIRKLAND:** The Flint 18-year-old was shot in a car Jan. 28 on Wood Street near Avenue A.
3. **TERRILL D. LANG:** The 16-year-old was shot near the intersection of Howard Avenue and Lippincott Boulevard on Feb. 18.
4. **MARQUAN T. HINKLE:** The Flint 16-year-old was shot March 11 at Pasadena Avenue and Dupont Street.
5. **NIYAUUNA S. JONES:** The Flint 5-year-old was shot July 6 as she rode in a car along Carpenter Road in Genesee Township.
6. **LATESHA TAYLOR:** The Flint 18-year-old was shot in the head July 16 while sitting in a parked car at a drive-through party store at Welch Boulevard and Chevrolet Avenue.
7. **DEONTE BREWTON:** The 18-year-old was shot July 24 at a house on Jane Avenue between Minnesota and N. Franklin avenues.

want quick access to a gun for protection, Compeau said.

In that case, the best option is a handgun locked in a small safe, inaccessible to children, he said. The gun box can be secured to a closet shelf so it can't be carried away, he said.

Such boxes are available for \$60 to \$150, he said.

In Michigan, parents often face civil neglect allegations if they fail to safeguard children from weapons.

But the state is among 28 that have no "child access prevention" law, which makes it a crime when adults fail to store weapons safely, said Peter Hamm, spokesman for the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence.

It might seem inhumane to charge a parent who has just lost a child, but the laws are a deterrent, Hamm said.

Compeau has another suggestion: Teach gun safety in the schools.

"You hope that by taking a hunter safety class a kid gets it into his head that you never point a gun at anybody, for any reason," he said. "And maybe there's a chance they'll learn that the first thing to do when you handle a gun is to check to see that it's unloaded."

## Woman claims she killed to protect unborn baby

By Paul Janczewski

pjanczewski@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6333

**FLINT** — A pregnant Cachet T. Dent was trying to protect her unborn baby when she stabbed a 14-year-old Flint girl to death in self-defense during a neighborhood brawl, her defense attorneys said Thursday.

That defense was presented to a jury during opening arguments in the trial of Dent on a charge of second-degree murder.

But assistant Genesee County Prosecutor Tamara J. Phillips said Dent, 18, of Mt. Morris, came up behind Dequandra L. Holden and stabbed the victim as she walked away from the melee. Phillips said the self-defense theory crumbles because "timing is everything" in that type of claim.

She also said Dent bragged to police about stabbing the girl.

Jurors heard from Phillips and attorney Daniel J. Andoni, who, along with attorney Robin L. Wheaton, is representing Dent in the trial.

Police and prosecutors said Holden's death came at the end of a 10 p.m. brawl Sept. 5 near 1609 and 1615 Welch

Bldg. that might have included up to eight females.

Dent, who was six months pregnant at the time, allegedly challenged Holden to fight while at a relative's house in Flint, some witnesses said in an earlier hearing.

But Dent told police the girls were "calling her out" to fight, and during that confrontation, the victim's sister pulled her hair as others struck her with a belt and began kicking her in the stomach. She told police she stabbed Holden in self-defense while the victim and another girl were punching and kicking her as she lay on the ground.

But witnesses at an earlier hearing said Dent broke away from the younger girl, picked up a knife from the ground and stabbed Holden from behind.

Holden later died from several stab wounds to her upper body.

Initially, Flint police had three knives in evidence. Several weeks ago, a fourth knife was found, but one of the original three knives went missing and has yet to be found.

Dent, who delivered her child last December, remains free on a cash bond. The trial, before Genesee Circuit Judge Joseph J. Farah, is expected to next week.



# SHOT KILLS A 'PRINCESS'



Vicki Taylor (seated), the mother of shooting victim Victoria Taylor, 9, is comforted by her husband, David, behind the police car in front of their Baldwin Boulevard home in Flint on Thursday.

## Girl, 9, was wrestling champion

By Kim Crawford  
Lansing Press-Scimitar • 410/96-6242  
and Bryn Mickle  
and Robert Small  
Lansing Press-Scimitar • 410/96-6333  
Lansing Press-Scimitar • 410/96-6302

FLINT — Victoria Taylor was unbeatable on the wrestling mat. The only girl among 46 boys on her wrestling club, 9-year-old Victoria had a room full of trophies and two national championships to her name.

"She had more energy than I've ever seen in any little girl," said coach Kevin Lovell.

That energy disappeared in the roar of a shotgun blast Thursday morning inside Victoria's home at the corner of W. Home Avenue and



A Victoria was at home with her brother, 10, and a wrestling teammate when she was shot.

Baldwin Boulevard on the city's north side. The Cundry Elementary fourth-grade was shot and killed in the home about 11:30 a.m.

It is not clear who shot Victoria with the shotgun bought in the summer after two break-ins at the home.

Her 10-year-old brother and their 10-year-old wrestling teammate also were in the home.

"Ten more days was all we needed," said her uncle, James Bard. "Then she would have been in school and this wouldn't have happened."

The shotgun had been purchased this summer after the Taylors' house was burglarized twice — once by a man who climbed through the window in the middle of the day, said another uncle, Marc Bard.

That's why they had the gun, "That's why they had the gun," said the uncle.

► Princess, A2

Inside: Flint has many tragic reminders that guns and children don't mix, A2

## Princess: Girl, 9, was a wrestling champion

Police last Thursday night would only confirm Victoria's name and age and that she had been shot to death. They said a male juvenile was detained and held in custody pending further investigation.

Mayor Don Williams and Lt. Ward Cundry, Darryl E. Buchanan, who represents the area, hurried to the scene where they heard about the shooting.

"I called my daughter," Buchanan said, "and told her to hang her head."

A young boy in blue shorts, who was Victoria's brother, was taken to a hospital. Flint police vehicles and officers were on the scene.

"This little girl had so much to give. She was impressive," said James Bard, uncle of Victoria.

One woman cried "No, no, no," and another said "Oh, my God." Another of Victoria's relatives jumped from his car and ran up to the scene shouting, "This was a little girl, she's just hurt."

As they tried to console each other, one person said: "It's going to be all right." But she rolled through her tears, "It's never going to be all right."

An A student who also excelled at track and basketball, Victoria started wrestling when she was 4.

"You said you were a wrestler, so we thought he was a little bit of a wrestler," said David Taylor, Victoria's father.

Even though Victoria was her father's little "Princess," family members said David Taylor taught her to wrestle.

Soon, she and her brother were wrestling together on the Westwood Heights Middle School wrestling team.

Her signature belt was a punch in the gut, she would say. "I'm 220 pounds and I'm 4'6", said Lovell, 46, of Goodrich.

The 10-pounder with two long pointed cheeks, Victoria was a wrestler who in April was ranked 9th in the state at the United States Girls Wrestling Association national championships in Lake Okauchie.

"She would have been a high-school All-American if she'd have stuck with it," said Flint police officer Dan Compas.

Compas said he was not a wrestler, but he was a coach. "She was a true princess," he said.

James Bard said he had so much to give. "Bard said, 'She was impressive.'"

One police officer removed evidence from the Taylor home.

in a small safe, inaccessible to children, he said. The gun box can be secured to a closet shelf so it can't be carried away, he said.

Such boxes are available for \$150, he said. In the past, police officers have advised parents to lock guns in a safe.

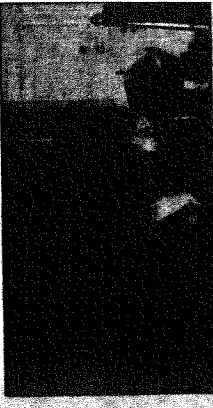
But the state is among 28 that have no "child access prevention" law, which makes it a crime when adults fail to store weapons safely.

Peter Hann, spokesman for the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, said it might seem inhumane to charge a parent who has just lost a child, but the law is a deterrent, Hann said.

Compas has another suggestion: Teach gun safety in the schools.

"You hope that by taking guns out of the house that you never point a gun at a body," he said.

"And maybe there's a chance they'll learn that the first thing to do when you handle a gun is to check to see that it's unloaded."



A Flint police officer removes evidence from the Taylor home.

# Granholt targeting drive-bys

## Governor pushes bills to increase penalties

By Marjory Raymer

mraymer@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6325

**FLINT** — The city's rash of deadly shootings has sparked a effort by Gov. Jennifer Granholm to crack down on community violence statewide.

Granholm this morning in Flint was to call on the Legislature to pass two bills that would stiffen the penalties for drive-by shootings — quadrupling prison sentences in some instances.

Granholm spokeswoman Liz Boyd said the new push is in direct response to recent spikes in violence in Flint — including three drive-by shootings last month — as well as incidents in Saginaw and Detroit.

Alexandria Jamison, 17, of Flint said she was glad to hear someone is paying attention to the problems of violence.

"This past month, it's really been getting out of hand," Alexandria said. "Everyday I turn on the news, somebody else is dying or somebody else is getting shot."

### Fighting violence

- Gov. Jennifer Granholm is calling on the Legislature to enact two proposed laws that would stiffen the penalties for drive-by shootings.
- Currently, the crime is punishable by up to 4 years in prison and a \$2,000 fine.
- The proposed laws would increase that penalty to 10 years and a \$10,000 fine, and, if the crime causes someone serious injury, the penalty jumps to 15 years and a \$15,000 fine.



Granholm

## Drive-bys: Bill to increase penalties for shootings | ◀ A1

The governor's news conference was to take place at the Boys and Girls Club of Flint, 3701 N. Averill Ave.

Granholm is putting pressure on the Legislature to quickly pass the two bills introduced by Rep. Brenda Clack, D-Flint.

"No family should have to live in fear in their own home," Granholm said in a statement. "This legislation will help local police crack down on those who terrorize our communities from a moving vehicle."

The maximum penalty for a drive-by shooting now is 4 years in prison and a \$2,000 fine — with no consideration of the severity of victims' injuries, Boyd said.

Clack's proposals would increase the penalty to 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine and up to 15 years and a \$15,000 fine if the victim is seriously injured.

"We will use all in our power to get them off of the streets," Clack said.

Several recent shootings were cited by the governor's office as motivation for the crackdown on drive-by shootings:

- NiYauna S. Jones, 5, died and her 9-year-old sister was wounded July 6 while riding in a car being test-driven by her cousin.

- Latesha Taylor, 18, died July 16 after being shot in the head while she waited in a car at a convenience store

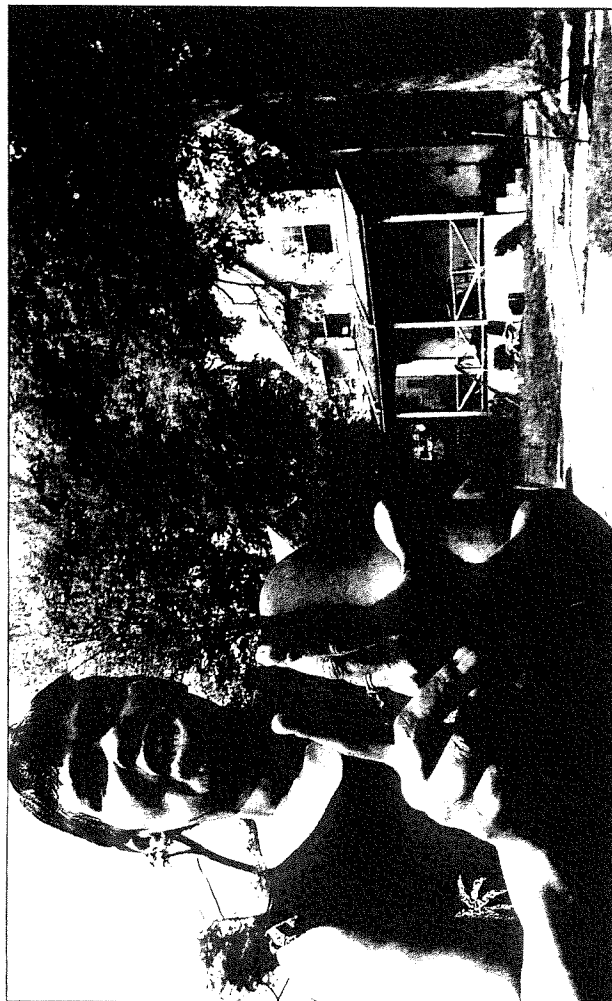
- Rapper Deion J.L. Smith, NiYauna's uncle, was shot and killed July 28 on E. Alma Avenue. A woman was critically wounded in the incident.

Granholm was to be joined for the news conference today by Clack and Col. Peter Munoz, director of the state police.

# Timia fights for her life



◀ Timia Bryant, 7, is listed in critical condition at Toledo Children's Hospital in Ohio.



The Flint Journal • Steve Hiesman

4 An angry Othello Gray, 51, of Flint speaks to the media Thursday outside of the Forest Hill Avenue house that was firebombed early Thursday, injuring Gray's granddaughter, Timia Bryant, 7. "She's slight and sweet, and now we could lose her," Gray said of Timia.

## Firebombing suspect still on the run

By Kim Crawford

Flint Journal Staff • 8 p.m. • 316-761-1111

In a Toledo hospital, Latoya Bryant of Flint kept vigil Thursday near her 7-year-old daughter, Timia, who is clinging to life after their home was firebombed. The little girl's uncle, Anthony Bryant, 28, who survived a gunshot wound to the chest less than two weeks ago, apparently

was the alleged victim of the attack early Thursday morning on Forest Hill Avenue. Timia's grandmothers, Yvonne Bryant and Othello Gray, talked to a church group Thursday about replacing their grandchildren's clothes and toys and finding them a new place to live. Flint police still are searching for a man they

say is a suspect in the firebombing, 29-year-old Trahaun Robinson of Flint. Robinson has been charged with shooting Anthony Bryant.

Bryant and the suspect were once friends, family members say.

"This is just so stupid," Gray said. "Anthony had been (Robinson's) friend."

▶ Timia, A2

## Wanted

- Flint police are looking for Trahaun Robinson in connection with the firebombing of a Flint house Thursday.
- Robinson, 29, is 5-foot-8, 150 pounds with short hair and a goatee. He also is known as "Little Man."
- Anyone with any information can call Flint Police Sgt. Jeff Collins at (810) 237-6911 or Crime Stoppers at (800) 422-JAIL.



Robinson

## Timia: Firebombing suspect still on the run | A1

He tried to talk to him." Yvonne Bryant agreed. "Trahaun was like a son to me — he practically lived with us," she said.

Gray said Anthony Bryant wasn't even home at the time of the firebombing. A warrant charging Robinson with assault with intent to murder in the July 17 shooting of Bryant was issued before he became wanted for questioning in the firebombing at the Bryant family home, 2108 Forest Hill.

Flint arson investigators say a Molotov cocktail — a bottle or jar filled with gasoline with a burning rag stuffed into the top — was thrown through a front window of the house just after

1:16 a.m. Thursday.

While several residents, including small children, escaped from the house unharmed, Timia apparently hid in an upstairs bedroom. She was rescued by Flint firefighters and taken to Hurley Medical Center in Flint, then transported to Toledo Children's Hospital in Ohio, where she is in critical condition.

Fire officials said she inhaled super-heated smoke. A hospital spokesperson said Thursday that Timia is being treated for carbon monoxide poisoning and was placed in a hyperbaric chamber, a clear, boxlike device in which she is given pure oxygen administered at higher-than-normal air pressure.

"What we don't know about is if she's suffered brain damage," Gray said Thursday. Gray called Timia an adorable little girl who enjoys tumbling and martial arts classes.

"She's slight and sweet, and now we could lose her," Gray said.

Court documents show Robinson has a lengthy criminal record. In September 1994, when Robinson was 17, he was acquitted of assault with intent to murder in a shooting he was alleged to have committed in January of that year.

Robinson and two other teenagers also were charged that year with shooting and burning the body of Dontae Mays in a garage on Grace Street.

In that case, Robinson pleaded no contest in November 1994 to the mutilation of a body and was sentenced to 3 years in state prison. In exchange for his plea, the office of then-Genesee County Prosecutor Arthur Busch dropped charges of assault with intent to murder and felony firearms.

# Slaying spurs rappers to action

## Coalition launches anti-violence drive

By Doug Pullen

dpullen@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6140

**FLINT** — The July 6 shooting death of 5-year-old NiYauna S. Jones was the last straw for a small but growing group of local rappers and producers who are launching a grass-roots anti-violence campaign.



NiYauna

About 30-40 members of the newly formed, non-profit One House Music Group Consortium were to don custom-made "Stop the Violence" T-shirts for NiYauna's funeral at noon today at Bethlehem Temple Church of the Apostolic Faith, 3401 King Ave.

"We want to bring a lot of people out," said Kerry Horton of One House Music Group and Bizvane Management, who is leading the effort.

The T-shirt, which fea-

• For the latest coverage of today's funeral of 5-year-old Flint shooting victim NiYauna S. Jones, go to [mlive.com/fljournal](http://mlive.com/fljournal).

**NEWS NOW**  
[mlive.com/fljournal](http://mlive.com/fljournal)

tures a red-and-white stop sign across the chest, was the brainchild of rapper and promoter Johnny Mayfield of 100 Spooks Entertainment. Mayfield said he's sick of the violence and hardships tearing apart Flint's inner city.

"It took a little girl for people to wake up," Mayfield said. "This should have been happening a long time ago."

He wore one of the shirts July 3 when he performed with fellow rapper Krow at the Flint Fourth of July Festival at Atwood Stadium.

"A lot of people were walking up to me, (saying) 'I like that shirt you're wearing. Very good. I'm behind that 100 per-

► Action, A2

launches anti-violence drive | ◀ A1

cent," he recalled.

Horton said the consortium grew out of his One House Music Group, a collection of local artists and labels that formed nearly two months ago to better promote themselves. He runs the group with partners Randy Rann

and Max-a-Million.

The anti-violence campaign started when a local club owner challenged the group "to do something positive." NiYauna's shooting death was the catalyst.

"We want to make a movement behind these artists; a positive approach," Horton said.

The group has received help and support from Flint Family Road, a health and wellness group, and The Rec-

ognition Factory, a supplier of business promotion items. It plans to meet with local politicians and sports figures in the near future to keep the momentum going.

They think their goals of combating violence and promoting their music can make a difference.

"The way to get to kids now is through music and to have things for them to do," Mayfield said. "You've got to give them a chance."

**"The way to get to kids now is through music and to have things for them to do. You've got to give them a chance."**

— Johnny Mayfield  
of 100 Spooks  
Entertainment

# Family mourns girl; search on for suspect

By Sally York

syork@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6322

FLINT — Niyauna Jones was a loving, energetic little girl who enjoyed playing mom to younger children and going to church.

Killed by a gunshot meant for someone else Thursday, the 5-year-old Flint girl leaves her family wanting justice.

Police say they believe the shooter's intended target was an employee of Universal Auto Sales in Genesee Township. The Flint man, 23, was riding in the back seat with Niyauna and her sister, Teaunna, 9, as their aunt and 18-year-old cousin took a Mercury Sable for a test drive about 2:30 p.m. Thursday.

A gunman shot at the



Niyauna



Teaunna

## To help Niyauna's family

- Those who wish to assist the Jones family with funeral and other expenses can donate to the Niyauna S. Jones Estate account at any Chase Bank.

car as it traveled down E. Carpenter Road in Genesee Township. Teaunna was wounded.

A man arrested Friday in the shooting could be

## Girl: Family mourns girl; man to be arraigned

◀ A1

arraigned today or Monday, a police official said. Police are still searching for at least one other man wanted in the attack.

But Lula Jones, Niyauna's grandmother, said her relatives told her that when the employee saw a white car with the assailants in it approach, he threw himself on the floor of the back seat.

"He's just as responsible (as the men in the white car)," she declared. "He knew he was putting those children's lives at risk. None of them cared about the children."

The car lot's owners — one is the father of the employee who was in the car with the girls — did not respond to requests for comment.

On Saturday, family members shared memories of Niyauna.

"She was the most sweet, humble person you would want to meet," said Lula Jones.

"She was like a servant, always wanting to help out. When she cleaned up a room, it was like a big person had done it."

The bullet that hit Teaunna pierced only fatty tissue along the base of her back. She is home from the hospital and said she feels "fine" now.

But she's very sad about Niyauna.

"My sister was nice," said

Teaunna, who will start third grade at Wilkins Elementary School in the fall. "I hope the police find the men who did it."

Niyauna lived with her grandparents, her mother, Erma, and three siblings — Teaunna, Shireuna, 7, and Teonta, 4 — on E. Alma Avenue. Niyauna's father, Darren Mance, was stabbed to death when Erma Jones was pregnant with Niyauna, Lula Jones said.

"She never got to meet her daddy," Lula Jones said, shaking her head. "There is too much violence around. We have to show love to one another."

Family members said they are consoled by an outpouring of support from the community. One woman has donated a cemetery plot for Niyauna, and others have contributed to a special account set up in Niyauna's name to help cover funeral and other expenses, Lula Jones said.

But the family's main source of comfort is God, said Elgie Jones, Niyauna's grandfather.

"With the Lord's help, we have survived," he said. "When I pray, it comforts my heart. Without (God), we couldn't make it."

After the attack, the 18-year-old cousin drove to a nearby convenience store, seeking help. The car lot employee bailed out of the car at the store, jumped into another car and left. Police located him, unharmed.

Niyauna wasn't as fortunate.

"Niyauna loved the babies, and she loved the church," Lula Jones said. "She loved to go. Every time I got ready to go somewhere, she'd say, 'Grandma, can I go, too?'"

Jones said a funeral is planned for Thursday, but no other details have been decided. Arrangements are being handled by Lawrence E. Moon Funeral Home, 906 W. Flint Park Blvd., Flint.